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AD VALOREM TAXATION.

SPEECH

OF

MOSES A. BLEDSOE, ESQ.,

OF WAKE,

*Delivered in the Senate of North-Carolina, on the
12th January, 1859,*

ON THE

BILL TO ALTER THE CONSTITUTION SO AS TO ENABLE THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO EQUALIZE TAXATION.

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BILL TO ALTER THE CONSTITUTION SO AS TO ENABLE THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY TO EQUALIZE TAXATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: The bill to alter the constitution of North-Carolina, now under consideration, was introduced, as is declared upon its face, for the purpose of enabling the general assembly to equalize taxation upon all the citizens and property in the State, in proportion to the protection enjoyed under the government. Under the amended constitution, the general assembly cannot equalize taxation upon all the property, without imposing an onerous and unreasonable tax upon polls.

The convention of 1835 so amended the constitution, as to require the legislature to lay an equal capitation tax upon all the "subjects of capitation tax throughout the State," thereby placing slaves, in reference to taxation, upon an equal footing with white men, and granting to the owners of slave-property a partial immunity from taxation, at the expense and to the great detriment of the owners of every other species of property.

I desire, Mr. Speaker, to remove from the constitution this restriction upon the general assembly, in reference to taxation, in order that those who enjoy the protection and blessings of

the government, may be made to contribute their just and equitable share to its support. I regard this restriction in the amended constitution, and the inequality and injustice of the revenue laws of North-Carolina which are the result of that restriction, as incompatible with the great principle of democratic republican equality, upon which the constitution was framed and the government established. If that *restriction*, which was an *innovation* upon the *constitution* of *our fathers*, is incompatible with the principles upon which the government was established, that alone, if there were no other, furnishes a sufficient reason for the passage of this bill.

In establishing the position which I have assumed, it is proper that I should advert to the circumstances under which the constitution was framed and the government established, in order to a clear understanding of the objects designed to be accomplished by those who originated and organized it.

We are assembled here to day, under the provisions of a constitution professing to have been framed by the representative of the people, by the authority of the people, for the benefit of the people, and adopted by them as the organic law of the State. Then the question arises, did those who framed the constitution under the provisions of which the Senate is now in session, have the right to set up a government for their mutual and equal protection and benefit? Those who are at all familiar with the history of the government of North-Carolina, will recollect that in the year 1775, a portion of the people of the State assembled in the town of Charlotte, and passed the following resolutions:

1. "That we the people of Mecklenburg county do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract or association with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our right and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

2. "That we do hereby declare ourselves a free independent people, are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the General Government of the Congress: to the maintenance of which independence, we

solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor."

It is thus shown that the people not only threw off the British yoke, but declared their independence of all other governments, and asserted the great principles of popular sovereignty and democratic republican equality upon which the government was established. But, Mr. Speaker, the resolutions which I have just read do not furnish the only evidence that this restriction is incompatible with the principles of our government, and subversive of the objects contemplated by the framers of the constitution. I invite the attention of the Senate to the 1st, 2d, 3d and 21st sections of the declaration of rights, which read as follows :

1. "That all political power is vested in and derived from the *people* only.

2. "That the *people* of this State ought to have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal police and government thereof.

3. "That no man or set of men are entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services.

21. "That a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty."

These sections from the declaration of rights, and which are declared to be a part of the constitution, show conclusively that the government was established by the people, in the exercise of that sovereign power which is "vested in and derived from the people only." It has not, and I presume will not, be denied by any Senator upon this floor, that the people had the right to frame a constitution and organize a government for themselves in 1776. They not only had the right, but in the exercise of that right, sent their representatives to the Congress that assembled in the town of Halifax, in 1776, which framed the constitution under which the government of North-Carolina was organized. That Congress not only framed the constitution, but left us a perpetual record of the *motives* by which they were actuated; the *reasons* by which they were influenced; the *authority* under which

they acted, and the *purposes* for which the *constitution* was *framed* and the *government* established.

The General Assembly is in session to-day under “the constitution or form of government *agreed to* and *resolved* upon by the *representatives* of the *freemen* of the *State of North-Carolina*, *elected* and *chosen* for that *particular purpose*, in Congress assembled, at Halifax the 18th day of December, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six. The preamble to the constitution declares that, “Whereas, allegiance and protection are in their nature reciprocal, and the one should of right be refused when the other is withdrawn; And whereas, George the Third, king of Great Britain, and late sovereign of the British American colonies, hath not only withdrawn from them his protection, but by an act of the British legislature, declared the inhabitants of these States out of the protection of the British crown, and all their property found upon the high seas liable to be seized and confiscated to the uses mentioned in the said act, and the said George the Third has also sent fleets and armies to prosecute a cruel war against them, for the purpose of reducing the inhabitants of the said colonies to a state of abject slavery, in consequence whereof all governments under the said king within these said colonies hath ceased, and a total dissolution of government in many of them hath taken place; And whereas, the continental congress having considered the premises, and other previous violations of the rights of the good people of America, have, therefore, declared that the thirteen united colonies are of right wholly absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, or any other foreign jurisdiction whatsoever, and that the said colonies now are, and forever shall be, free and independent States; wherefore, in our present state, *in order to prevent anarchy and confusion*, it becomes necessary that a government should be established in this State: *Therefore, we, the representatives of the freemen of North-Carolina, chosen and assembled in Congress for the express purpose of framing a constitution, under the authority of the people, most conducive to their happiness and prosperity*, do declare that a government for this State

shall be established in manner and form following, to wit, &c."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the constitution informs us that for certain reasons enumerated in the preamble which I have just read, a total dissolution of government had taken place, and that the thirteen united colonies were and forever should be free and independent States.

Having declared their independence of "all foreign jurisdiction whatsoever," and asserted their "exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police of the State," and being without a government, they proceed as follows: "wherefore in our present state, in order to prevent anarchy and confusion, it becomes necessary that a government should be established in this State: *Therefore, we, the representatives of the freemen of North-Carolina, chosen and assembled in Congress for the express purpose of framing a constitution under the authority of the people, most conducive to their happiness and prosperity*, do declare that a government for this State shall be established in manner and form following."

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I have shown conclusively from the Constitution itself that the government of North-Carolina was established by the people; that they had the right to establish it, and that they intended, and did frame a Constitution most conducive to their happiness and prosperity. If I have succeeded in showing that the constitution was framed under the authority of the people for the purpose of promoting their happiness and prosperity, it is only necessary to show further, that the freemen of North-Carolina were not only equals, but had a right to an equal participation in the benefits, and were equally subject to the burthens of government, in order to establish the position that the restriction in the amended Constitution is incompatible with, and repugnant to the great principle of *democratic republican equality* upon which the Constitution was framed. The Constitution declares upon its face that it was framed by the "Representatives of the freemen of North-Carolina under the authority of the people." And as there is no line of distinction drawn in the Constitution, but, on the contrary, an express declaration, "that no man or set of men shall be entitled to exclusive

or separate emoluments, or privileges, from the community, but in consideration of public services"—that *all the freemen of the State* were on a *perfect political equality in reference* to the benefits and burthens which were to flow from the organization of the government. But if the Constitution had not so explicitly declared it, we know that our fathers all aided in the achievement of our liberties and the establishment of the government. Every Senator who knows anything of the history of his country knows that the freemen of North-Carolina were all equals in that time of privation and toil "which tried men's souls," that they were politically equals on the forum and in the field, and that they equally suffered and bled and died for their country.

Was not, Mr. Speaker, the blood of honest poverty offered upon the altar of patriotism as acceptable a sacrifice to the God of liberty as that which flowed from the heart of the purest, the proudest, and the noblest in the land? If so, and the political equality of those by whom and for whose benefit I assume the government was established be admitted, and it cannot be successfully controverted, are we not driven to the conclusion that it was organized for the *equal protection* and *benefit* of all who had aided in the achievement of liberty and the establishment of the government?

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the people of North-Carolina had the right to organize a government for their mutual and equal protection, and did, in the exercise of their sovereign power, as a free and independent people, frame a Constitution "most conducive to their happiness and prosperity," did they not frame a Constitution protecting *equally all the citizens* and *all the property* in the State, and subjecting all alike to the burthens of supporting the government? When it came from the hands of our fathers, whose hearts were glowing with a love of liberty, and swelling with emotions of patriotism, it contained no discrimination in favor of or against any particular class of citizens or property, nor any such *restriction* upon the Legislature as that which the bill under consideration proposes to strike out.

If the Constitution, when it came from their hands, con-

tained no discrimination in favor of or against any particular class of citizens or property, nor any such restriction upon the General Assembly, whence came this subsequent discrimination in our Constitution, so wholly inconsistent with all of our ideas of equality and justice, and so utterly repugnant to the principles of our government?

Mr. Speaker, the discrimination sought to be stricken down by the bill under consideration is an *innovation* upon the Constitution—a libel upon the principle of Democratic republican equality, and an insult to the intelligence, self-respect and patriotism of our fathers as well as of ourselves.

If these things be true, should we not, inspired by an unaffected reverence for our ancestors, and a sense of justice to the people, remove from the Constitution a restriction so irreconcilable with the great principles of equality and justice upon which it was framed, and without the observance of which the government cannot exist?

A just appreciation of the principles of our government, and a due regard for them, alone furnish a sufficient reason for the passage of this bill.

But there are other and more urgent reasons for its passage at this time, in view of the financial condition and Revenue laws of the State.

It is well known that the public debt has been rapidly increasing for the last few years, on account of the various schemes of internal improvement in which the State has embarked.

By reference to the very able report of the public treasurer, made to this General Assembly, it will be seen that the present and prospective liabilities of the State are over twelve and a half millions of dollars.

While the resources of the State are amply sufficient, under a *proper system of revenue*, to meet the demands upon her treasury, it is nevertheless a very large debt for a people so little accustomed to heavy taxation. But however large the debt may seem, and however onerous the taxes may become, the debt must and will be paid, and the faith and honor of the State protected and maintained. It is a just and

honest debt, and the people will never dishonor themselves, and disgrace the State, by refusing to pay it. But this debt, for the payment of which the faith and honor of the State are pledged, was made for the benefit of all the citizens and property in the State ; for the purpose of promoting the *general interest* and *prosperity* of the State at large.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the public debt was incurred for the benefit of all the citizens and property in the State, should not all the citizens and property in the State contribute to its payment? Can any good reason be assigned why all for whose benefit the debt was made should not contribute to the payment of it? The only resource of the State to pay its *debt* and *support* the *government* is the *power of taxation*; and if the *government* was established by *all* the *citizens*, and for the protection and benefit of *all*, should not *all* the *citizens and property*, in collecting the *revenue* necessary to support the government and pay the debt of the State, be made to contribute in proportion to the *protection* enjoyed?

I say now, Mr. Speaker, what I have said before, that the revenue laws of North-Carolina have been framed upon no sound principle of political economy, and therefore their practical operations in detail have been *unjust* and *unequal*. Take, for example, the operation of the present law in the collection of revenue for *State* and *County* purposes. For State purposes, a thousand dollars worth of land is now taxed one dollar and fifty cents, while a slave worth one thousand dollars is only taxed fifty cents. And a slave mechanic worth two thousand dollars is taxed no more than an ordinary or infirm field hand, worth only five hundred dollars. Interest on money loaned is taxed about one-fourth of one per cent., or two dollars and forty cents on each thousand dollars loaned, while the same amount (\$1,000) in old carriages or other vehicles, is taxed ten dollars, or one per cent. upon their value. A thousand dollars employed in merchandise is taxed one-third of one per cent., or three dollars thirty-three and a third cents, while a lawyer, physician, officer, overseer or other person whose salary, fees or wages, amount to one thousand dollars, is taxed ten dollars, whether he own any proper-

ty or not. The average tax upon land throughout the State, for State and county purposes, is forty-three cents on each one hundred dollars in value, or four dollars and thirty cents on each thousand dollars, while the average tax on slaves, for State and county purposes, is only twenty-four cents on each hundred dollars in value, or two dollars and forty cents upon each thousand dollars; from which it appears that a thousand dollars invested in land is made to pay, under the present revenue law, one dollar and ninety cents more tax than the *same amount invested in taxable slave property*. It is only necessary to institute a comparison of the amount of tax paid by the different classes of persons, and the different species of property, to demonstrate the *inequality* and *injustice* of the system. Thus it will be seen, Mr. Speaker, that our revenue system is not only not based upon any recognized principle of political economy, but, if any effort has ever been made to equalize taxation, even as far as it might be done under the constitution, it has been a signal failure; for the present law does not even approximate to anything like equality or justice.

That our revenue system is a very bad one, must be admitted by every candid Senator who has given it the slightest investigation. If, then, the revenue system is admitted to be defective, and the law operates unequally and unjustly in the collection of revenue to defray the expenses of the government, the question very naturally arises, can the General Assembly, under the present constitution, equalize taxation upon all the citizens and property in the State? If taxation can be equalized under the present constitution, why has it not been done? If it cannot be equalized under the present constitution, ought not the constitution to be altered? I hope some Senator will answer these questions.

But, Mr. Speaker, the defect in our revenue system is attributable to the restriction upon the General Assembly, embraced in the article of the constitution, which the bill under consideration proposes to amend; and the evil can never be remedied, nor taxation equalized, until the constitution is *altered*.

The public debt must be paid, either by a portion only, or the whole of the citizens and property of the State. As the debt was incurred for the benefit of all, justice demands that all should contribute to the payment of it. But if it must be paid by a *portion only* of the citizens and property, in whose favor should the discrimination be made? If any discrimination be made, should it not be in favor of those who have derived least benefit from the public debt? And should not those who have been most benefitted, pay most of the debt of the State?

If the public debt must be paid under the present revenue laws, the great burthen of taxation will doubtless rest upon the shoulders of those who are least able to bear it, and who have derived least benefit from the expenditure of the public money. Some Senator will ask, who has been most benefitted by incurring the public debt? There can be but one answer to that question, and that is, that the slaveowners of the State, being the largest producers and consumers, have unquestionably derived the greatest benefits from our internal improvements, on account of which the public debt has been made. But the slaveowners of the State have not only been more benefitted by our internal improvements, as the largest producers and consumers, but the works of internal improvement have been mainly constructed by slave labor, and consequently a very large sum of the public money has gone directly into the hands of slaveowners. It is, therefore, a fact which cannot be successfully controverted, that the owners of slaves have been both, directly and indirectly, more benefitted than any other class of property holders in the State. If slaveowners have been more benefitted than any other class of property holders, I presume every fair minded man will admit that they ought to contribute to the payment of the public debt, at least in the proportion which the slave property bears to the aggregate amount of property in the State. But will they pay their just proportion of the public debt under our present revenue system? According to the most reliable information on that subject, there are in this State 358,376 slaves,

worth at an average value of \$500 each, about one hundred and eighty millions of dollars. Of this number only 150,925 are taxed. The amount of taxation upon this one hundred and eighty millions of dollars in slave property is \$75,462 50.

Thus it will be seen, Mr. Speaker, that although slaves constitute at least from one-third to one-half of the aggregate amount of property in value in the State, it pays into the public treasury, under the present system, less than one-seventh of the public revenue. Whereas, it ought to pay an amount equal to the proportion which it bears to the aggregate property of the State, which would be from one-third to one-half of the aggregate amount of revenue raised on property. But in order that the inequality and injustice of our revenue laws may appear in a more glaring light, let us pursue this investigation a little further, and repeat the difference in the amount of tax paid on a thousand dollars worth of land and a thousand dollars in slave property, for State and county purposes. The average tax throughout the State on a hundred dollars worth of land, for State and county purposes, is 43 cents, and the average tax on black poll, at an average value of \$500 each, for State and county purposes, is about one dollar and twenty cents, from which it appears that while \$1000 in land pays \$4.30, \$1000 in slaves pays only \$2.40, notwithstanding slave-owners have derived more benefit from the public debt than any other class of property holders.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I have shown conclusively that the present revenue system discriminates very unjustly in favor of the owners of slave property and against the owners of every other species of property in the State, and that all do not contribute their just proportion to the support of the government and the payment of the public debt.

If justice demands that all should contribute to the support of the government and the payment of the public debt, in proportion to the protection enjoyed and the benefits received, and the General Assembly has no power under the present Constitution to equalize taxation on property without doing gross injustice to her citizens, ought not this bill to pass, the

restriction be removed, and the power given to the Legislature to equalize taxation?

But while the principle of equality in taxation is admitted to be correct, by nearly or quite every member of the General Assembly, they refuse to adopt the only means by which it can be attained; and, as a reason for refusing to vote for this bill, which would accomplish it, raise various objections to altering the Constitution, which I will now proceed to state and examine.

The first objection is, that the people are satisfied with the Constitution as it is, and therefore it ought not to be altered.

The objection wears some plausibility on its face, to a casual observer, but a stricter scrutiny will discover the selfishness which lies concealed behind it. It is true there has been no general movement in favor of the alteration proposed, because, until recently, there has been no very urgent necessity for it, in view of the financial condition of the State. In 1835, when this innovation and discrimination were engrafted upon the Constitution, the entire revenue of the State was less than seventy-five thousand dollars. At that time the amount of tax which the people were called upon to pay, was so inconsiderable as to be entirely disregarded by them. And it was a matter of but slight importance, in a pecuniary point of view, whether the revenue was collected from all or only a portion of the citizens and property in the State. We were then clear of debt, and there was no apparent necessity for contracting a debt.

Under these circumstances the Convention of 1835 incorporated into the Constitution the restriction upon the General Assembly, and, as a necessary result, the discrimination against a very large majority, and in favor of a very small minority of the people of the State, which this bill proposes to strike out. It was placed in the Constitution with but very little if any discussion, either before the Convention, at the Convention, or prior to the ratification of the amended Constitution, so far as I have been able to learn from the debates and journals of the Convention, or the newspapers of that day

The amended constitution was submitted to the people of the State, and they ratified the action of the convention, without the matter being discussed or brought to their notice, and without detecting the fact that they were forging a fetter for themselves and their children. In view of these facts, the great body of the people of the State have a right to insist that this restriction shall be removed and the discrimination against nineteen-twentieths and in favor of one-twentieth of them shall be stricken down, and to demand that equality to which they are entitled under the fundamental principles of the government, and which they enjoyed under the constitution prior to 1835. I have nothing to say against the members of the convention of 1835. I shall impute to them no improper motive. The financial condition of the State was such, that the restriction wrought no very great hardship upon any one at that time, so far as the question of taxation was involved, and hence there was nothing said to stimulate investigation or excite opposition either in the convention or in the public mind. But I cannot so readily or satisfactorily account for the abandonment of the great principle of republican equality involved in this restriction, and which is an indispensable element in the government of a free and independent people. But the financial condition of the State is now very different from what it was in 1835. Then we owed no public debt, and paid but little tax. Now we owe a large and accumulating public debt; and the taxes are not only onerous but still increasing. What was then regarded as a matter of indifference is now a matter of grave importance. When all are suffering, it is proper and necessary that *each one* should bear his just proportion. Is it, therefore, either generous or just that those who have enjoyed the benefit of this *discrimination*, this *partial immunity* from taxation for so many years, should insist upon it in perpetuity? But if those who have enjoyed not only this partial immunity from taxation, but derived the greatest benefit from the expenditures of the public money, do insist upon this discrimination in perpetuity, can the great mass of the people of the State, in justice to themselves and posterity, submit to it? Certainly

not. They cannot, ought not, and will not submit to it. Should not the owners of slave-property come forward with that spirit of magnanimous liberality which should ever inspire the heart of patriotism, to the support of this measure, voluntarily surrender the superior advantages which they have so long enjoyed, and place themselves and their property on an equality with their neighbor's who are less able, but who have had to bear the burthens of government in an undue proportion for the last twenty-four years?

The second objection to altering the constitution is, that this restriction upon the General Assembly was one of the compromises of 1835.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if this be true, I must confess that I have totally failed to discover any evidence of the fact in the investigation which I have made of this subject; and I think that those who urge it will find themselves upon an investigation of the matter without the slightest evidence to sustain the objection. I deny, therefore, that it was one of the compromises of 1835; and I challenge those who assume that it was to furnish evidence of the fact, if they can. If it had been one of the compromises of 1835, the act calling and restricting the convention would furnish the same evidence upon this subject, which it does in reference to those subjects which were compromised in fact. The General Assembly of 1834 agreed upon certain alterations which were to be made by a convention to be held in the city of Raleigh in 1835. The subjects of compromise were all incorporated into the constitution in conformity with the restrictions imposed upon the convention by the Legislature of 1834. There were certain other matters specified in the act of 1834, upon which the convention was not restricted, but might or might not act as it deemed proper. Among those alterations suggested in the act, but left discretionary with the convention to be made or not, was that of restricting the General Assembly, in the collection of revenue, to an equal capitation tax upon slaves and white persons. That it was not then considered one of the compromises is evident from the fact that the convention was not, as in the case of those subjects which were com-

promised, required to make the alteration, but left perfectly free to make it or not. Those who assert that this was one of the compromises of 1835, apparently forget that a compromise is a mutual concession of rights. If there must be a mutual concession of rights to constitute a compromise, what equivalent was given to the non-slaveholder in consideration of the discrimination against him? None whatever. Does he enjoy any privilege not enjoyed by the slaveholder, or is he exempt from any duty imposed upon the slaveholder under the government? No, sir. Can there be a compromise where there is no mutual concession of rights? I think not.

If, then, Mr. Speaker, the non-slaveholder enjoys no privileges under the government, other than those enjoyed by slaveholders, in consideration of this discrimination against him, there *was* no mutual concession of rights; it was no compromise, and the objection fails.

The third objection is, that the public debt was incurred under the present *system of revenue*, and, *therefore*, it ought to be paid under it. I think this the weakest of all the objections made to an alteration of the Constitution, and the abandonment of this unjust revenue system. If it be admitted that because a revenue law (framed upon no principles of justice or equality) was in force when the public debt was made it should be continued until that debt be paid, how can we justify the Legislature in bringing in new subjects of taxation, or increasing the taxes on the old, before the public debt is paid? And if that principle were adopted generally by the statesmen of North-Carolina, we should have but little use for another General Assembly; for if our laws are to be unchangeable like those of the Medes and Persians, we have quite enough to last us for all time to come. But I think the objection was better adapted to the views of the Medes and Persians than to the enlightened freemen of North Carolina in the nineteenth century.

I might ask, Mr. Speaker, if a partial immunity from taxation for twenty-five years, by that class of property holders who have derived the chief benefit from the public debt, was

not quite long enough to satisfy liberal men? But I could hardly hope for a satisfactory answer from one who would raise so flimsy an objection to a change in a revenue system which is admitted to be unfair, unequal and unjust.

The fourth objection to the passage of the bill under consideration is, that if the Constitution should be altered, negroes as well as other property will be taxed *ad valorem*.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have met with no member of the Legislature or other person who does not admit the correctness of the principle of taxation *ad valorem* upon every other species of property. Now if the principle be correct in its application to other property, why not in its application to slave property? Are not slaves property? This is a question of vast importance, not only to North-Carolina, but to the whole South. And as it is not improper to ascertain the opinions of others in reference to a matter in which we are so vitally interested, I hope the Senate will pardon me for reading a portion of a speech recently delivered in the city of New Orleans by one of the ablest statesmen, not only in this country, but of the world, upon this subject. Senator Douglas, in addressing the citizens of New Orleans upon the question of slavery in the territories of the United States, says :

"The Democratic party says that Congress has no right to establish or to prohibit slavery. We say that the territories should be open to the citizens of the United States to go there with their property, and subject alike to the laws, when they arrive there. But an objection is raised by some of our southern friends, and I have been asked here and at home what I meant by the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the territories, and whether we abide by the Dred Scott decision. In a discussion with my opponent, Mr. Lincoln, at Freeport, Illinois, the question was put to me whether, in the event that the people or Legislature of a territory were hostile to slavery, there was any lawful means by which slavery could be excluded. I said yes, and proceeded to state the means. I will state them here to you: The Democracy of Illinois, in the first place, accepts the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Dred Scott, as an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. In accordance with that decision, we hold that *slaves are property*, and hence on an *equality with all other kinds of property*, and the owner of a slave has the same right to move into a territory, and carry his slave property with

him, as the owner of any other property has to go there and carry his property. All citizens of the United States, no matter whether they come from the North or the South, from a free State or a slave State, can enter a territory with their property on an equal footing. But I apprehend, when you arrive there with your property, you are subject to the local law of the territory. How can your slave property be protected without local law? The Constitution gives you a right to go into a territory and carry your slave property with you; but it does not punish any man for stealing your slave when you get there. It does not punish a man for stealing any other property when you get there. Congress never yet passed a law to punish crime or protect property in any organized territory. Congress never yet passed a criminal code for any organized territory. It has simply organized the territory and established a legislature, that legislature being vested with legislative power over all rightful subjects of legislation, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Hence, whatever jurisdiction the Legislature possesses over other property, it has over slave property, no more, no less. Let me ask you, as southern men, can you hold slaves any where unless protected by the local law? Would not the inaction of the local Legislature, its refusal to provide a slave code, or to punish offences against that species of property, exclude slavery just as effectually as a constitutional prohibition? Would it not have that effect in Louisiana and in every other State? No one will deny it. Then let me ask you if the people of a territory refuse to pass a slave code how are you going to make them do it? When you give them power to legislate on all rightful subjects of legislation, it becomes a question for them to decide, and not for me. If the local Legislature imposes a tax on horses, or on any other kind of property, you may think it a hardship, but how are you going to help it? Just so it is with regard to traffic in liquors. If you are dealing in liquors you have the same right to take your liquors into the territory that any body else has to take any other species of property. You may pass through and take your liquors *in transitu*, and you will be protected in your right of property under the Constitution of the United States; but if you open the packages, they become subject to the local law, and should the Maine law happen to prevail in the territory, you had better travel with your liquors. Hence if the local Legislature has the same right over slave property as over every other species of property, what right have you to complain of that equality? But if you do complain, how are you going to help it? And let me say to you that if you oppose this just doctrine, if you attempt to exempt slaves from the same rules that apply to every other kind of property, you will abandon your strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the Black Republicans and Abolitionists."

Now, Mr. Speaker, while I introduce Senator Douglas's

speech to sustain the position which I have taken, that slaves are property and ought to be taxed as property, it must not be inferred that I endorse his opinion that a territorial legislature can legally exclude slaves, or any other kind of property in the possession and enjoyment of which the constitution protects me, from the common territory of the United States. Congress cannot confer upon the territorial legislature a power which it does not itself possess. To assume, therefore, that a territorial legislature, the creature of Congress, can legally exercise a power which it is admitted Congress cannot exercise under the constitution, is a monstrous absurdity; for it is conceding to the territories, while they are dependent upon and under the control of the general government, a power which can only be exercised by them under the constitution of the United States, after they have been admitted into the Union as sovereign States. If the Legislature were to pass a law excluding slavery from a territory, would not the supreme court of the United States declare it unconstitutional? And would not the general government protect me in the enjoyment of my property, in defiance of the law of the Legislature? Has not Congress the power to abolish a territorial government? If so, and it exercises it, what becomes of the law, the legislature, and the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the territories?

But to return to the discussion of the subject under consideration: It will be seen, Mr. Speaker, by the admirers of Senator Douglas, that he sustains my position that slaves are property, and ought therefore to be taxed as property. And he admonishes the South that whenever you "attempt to exempt slaves from the same rules that apply to every other kind of property, you will abandon your strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the black republicans and abolitionists." Therefore, Mr. Speaker, those who attempt to exempt slaves from the same rules that apply to every other kind of property, have, if Senator Douglas's views are correct, yielded their strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the black republicans and abolitionists, and are,

to that extent, giving "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the institution of slavery and the South.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am not only sustained by the high authority of Senator Douglas, in the position that slaves are property, and can be held only as property, but by authorities entitled to more confidence and respect than even Senator Douglas. I am sustained in my position, Mr. Speaker, by the constitution of the United States, by the fugitive slave law, the decision of the supreme court of the United States in the Dred Scott case, and the constitutions and laws of all the southern States, under all of which slaves are recognized and treated as property. If it be admitted, and I presume no Senator will deny it, that slaves are property, why not tax them as property? If they are property, why should they be taxed only as persons? The black republicans and abolitionists say that slaves are persons only, and not property; and those who insist that they shall be taxed only as persons, and "attempt to exempt them from the same rules" of taxation "that apply to every other kind of property," tacitly admit the truth of what they say. But if slaves are property, are they, as property, entitled to any exemption from taxation, more than any other species of property? Upon what reasonable pretext can the owners of one species of property claim an advantage over the owners of every other kind of property, in paying the taxes necessary to support a government which affords equal protection to all kinds of property?

Under a government where there should be a perfect political equality, and where A has as much right to invest his money in land, as B has to invest his in bank stock or C his in slaves, there certainly can be no good reason why A and B should pay more tax for the support of the government than C where the investments have been equal in amount, and where all the investments are equally protected by the government. It will not be denied that all of our citizens have the right to invest their means, and as a general rule do invest them, in that kind of property which they believe to be the most remunerative. Now if A thinks \$1000 invested in land, will pay him a larger profit than the same amount

invested in bank stock or slaves, and B thinks \$1000 invested in bank stock will pay him a larger profit than the same amount invested in land or slaves, and C thinks \$1000 invested in slave property will pay him a larger profit than the same amount invested in land or bank stock, does that furnish a satisfactory reason why A should be taxed \$4 30 on his investment, B \$2 40 on his, and C only \$1 20 on his? This is the practical operation of our present system of revenue; fully illustrates the inexpediency, inequality and injustice of the system; and furnishes a conclusive argument in favor of the change proposed by the introduction of the bill before the Senate. But this is not all, Mr. Speaker, slave-property requires and receives not only as much but more protection under the government of North-Carolina, than any other species of property. They are protected, both as property and as persons. This is as it should be, but while they are and ought to be *protected* as persons and property, they should be taxed only as property. If my neighbor inflicts an injury upon my slave, I may seek redress in the courts of justice and recover damages for the injury done to my property, but I can recover nothing for the pain and suffering inflicted upon my slave as a person; that is a deed for which he must be indicted, convicted and punished as an offence against the "peace and dignity of the State." If, therefore, slaves require and receive more protection under the laws of the State than any other kind of property, their owners certainly ought to be willing to pay as much tax in proportion to value as the owners of other property have to pay for the support of the government. But there is another fact which should not be overlooked. Slave-property is not only as well protected as any other kind of property, but is equally as *profitable*, if not more so, than any other kind of property in the State. And that is not all, it is not only as well protected and as profitable to its owners as any other kind of property, but is much more easily convertible into money than any other species of property in this State.

If then, Mr. Speaker, the principle of taxation *ad valorem* is correct; if it be correct in its application to every other

species of property ; if slaves are property ; if one species of property as such is not entitled to superior advantages over another ; if slaves are acquired and disposed of like other property ; if the owners of one species of property are not entitled to greater privileges than the owners of every other species of property ; if we have a right to invest our money in whatever kind of property we choose, and choose to invest it in other property than slaves, because we think it will pay us better ; if slave property requires, and receives more protection under the laws of the State than any other kind of property ; if it is as profitable as any other kind of property, and if it is more easily convertible into money than any other kind of property, can any good and sufficient reason be given why slaves should not be taxed *ad valorem* as well as any other kind of property ?

The fifth objection to altering the constitution is, that young negroes ought not to be taxed because they cannot make a support, and are unprofitable.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if this objection furnishes an argument against the passage of this bill, it furnishes a much stronger argument against the present system of revenue, for it involves the principle of taxation on profits alone ; and if no property ought to be taxed which does not yield an annual profit to its owner, it must be conceded that our present revenue law is based upon an erroneous and unjust principle, and the sooner we abandon it the better. But if young negroes ought not to be taxed because they cannot make a support, and are unprofitable, will not the same objection apply with equal force to forest, waste, oldfields and worn-out lands, untenanted houses, and all other unprofitable property ? If, therefore, young negroes ought not to be taxed because they yield no annual profit in cash to their owners, why do you tax uncultivated lands, untenanted houses, vehicles, silver plate, jewelry and various other kinds of property which yield no annual profit to their owners ? If we should adopt the principle of taxing no property which does not yield an annual profit in cash, and tax all property in proportion to its annual profit, the result would be that industry, energy and

enterprise would have to support a government affording equal protection and benefits to indolence, ignorance and sloth. But no Senator will defend a principle so palpably erroneous and unjust. The property of the State is the only legitimate subject of taxation, upon which the State can safely rely for the support of the government and the payment of the public debt. All the property in the State, therefore, of whatever kind should be made to contribute to the payment of the expenses of the government according to its value, whether it yields to its owner an annual profit in cash or not. Unprofitable property requires and enjoys as much protection as that which yields a profit. And if it is necessary to protect that kind of property by law, it should be made to pay for the protection which it needs and receives.

If, Mr. Speaker, your neighbor injures your unprofitable little negro, the law gives you as sure and speedy a remedy as if he injures the most valuable hand upon your farm, and you claim the same protection of law over the unprofitable young negro that you do over the adult profitable man. If, then, they are equally protected by the government, why should they not be equally subject to taxation to support the government? But annual profit in cash is not the proper test in deciding what property shall, and what property shall not, be taxed.

In this country, the object of almost every man is to accumulate an estate, and his object is as fully attained if he grows rich by the annual increased value of his property, as if he receives his annual profits in cash. Therefore, if A invests \$10,000 in young negroes from one to ten years of age, and they increase in value ten per cent. per annum over and above their expenses, which is a very low estimate; and B invests \$10,000 in bank stock, which yields him an annual dividend of ten per cent. in cash, it is perfectly plain that A is accumulating an estate as rapidly as B. And if A is growing rich as rapidly as B, and his property requires as much protection, and it costs the State more to protect it, why should he not pay as much tax as B? But although young negroes do not pay to their owners an annual profit in cash,

it is well known that they pay a larger profit in their annual enhanced value than land, money at interest, stocks, or any other species of property in the State. If, then, young negroes enhance in value more rapidly than any other species of property, and if a man grows rich more rapidly by investing his money in them, than if he invests it in any other kind of property, and if it costs the government more to protect them, why should not young negroes be taxed as other property to support the government?

—The sixth objection to altering the constitution is, *that it will injure the institution of slavery.*

In what way, Mr. Speaker, will it injure the institution of slavery in North-Carolina to tax slaves as property and not as persons? Will the institution of slavery suffer by putting slaves as property on an equal footing with all the other property in the State in reference to taxation? What is the Abolition and Black Republican idea of the right of property in slaves? It is that slaves are *not* property. What is the Democratic idea of the right of property in slaves? It is, if Senator Douglas is to be regarded as good authority upon that subject, "that slaves are property, and hence on an equality with all other kinds of property."

The issue, then, between the Democratic party, both North and South, and the Black Republican and Abolition parties is, whether slaves are to be regarded as persons or property. That was *the issue* in the late campaign in Illinois, between Douglas and Lincoln; and hence, while Douglas proclaims to the world that "the Democracy of Illinois, in the first place, accepts the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Dred Scott, as an authoritative interpretation of the constitution;" and, "in accordance with that decision, holds that slaves are property, and hence on an equality with all other kinds of property," we find Lincoln at Alton declaring, amid shouts of applause from the Black Republicans and Abolitionists, his opposition to the idea of property in slaves, and exultingly asking—"and when this new principle—this new proposition that no human being ever thought of three years ago, is brought forward, I combat it as

having an evil tendency, if not an evil design ; combat it as having a tendency to dishumanize the *man*, to take away from him all right to be supposed or considered as human. I combat it, therefore, as being one of the thousand and one things doing in these days for the purpose of preparing the public mind for making property, and nothing but property, of the negro in all the States of this Union."

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the right of property in slaves is recognized by the ablest statesmen and jurists in the Union, by the Democratic party North and South, by the laws of Congress, by the Supreme Court of the United States, by the constitution of the United States, and by the constitutions of all the Southern States, and confirmed by the opposition of Black Republicans, how, I ask, can any sane man suppose for a moment that the institution of slavery can be injured by taxing slaves as property in North-Carolina? But if the institution of slavery should suffer in North-Carolina, who, I ask, will be responsible for it, those who propose to place it on an equal footing and identify it with the other property of the State, or those who "attempt to exempt slaves from the same rules that apply to every other kind of property," and thereby "abandon the strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the Black Republicans and Abolitionists?"

If slave property were taxed *ad valorem*, and paid its just and equitable share of the expenses of the government, would not the owners of every other species of property be interested in its protection, whether they owned slave property or not? If so, would it not give strength to the institution to make the alteration proposed? And if it would give strength, instead of injuring the institution, is it not the true interest of slave-owners to advocate the change? In Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and other southern States, slaves are taxed as property, *ad valorem* ; and no one ever heard that the institution of slavery had been injured or weakened in those States by being taxed as property ; and, I apprehend, they are as good southern States, and as free from abolitionism and black republicanism as North-Carolina. If the institution of slavery has not suffered in Georgia, Tennessee and

Florida, by being taxed *ad valorem*, how can it suffer in North-Carolina by being taxed in the same way? If the institution ever suffers in this State, those alone will be responsible for the injury it sustains, who insist upon making a distinction between slaves and other property, the inevitable result of which will be the alienation of non-slaveholders from it, and the engendering of prejudice in their minds against it.

But, Mr. Speaker, if slave-owners would consult their real interest, or yield to the impulses of a generous patriotism rather than the suggestions of a blind avarice, and step forward and voluntarily surrender a discrimination, the benefits of which they have enjoyed at the expense of their less favored neighbors since 1835, the institution of slavery would be stronger in North-Carolina than it has ever been since the organization of the government. Slave-owners, therefore, should be the most zealous advocates of the passage of this bill; for as soon as the restriction is removed from the constitution, and slave property is reduced to an equality with all the other property of the State, every man who owns property of any kind, and claims the right to hold it, and the protection of the government over it, becomes interested in slaves as property, and is bound by self interest, as well as the law of the land, to protect slaves as property under any emergency which may arise. If, then, the institution of slavery will be strengthened by making slave property contribute to the support of the government, in proportion to its value as property, and by interesting in that way every non-slaveholder in its protection; and if, on the other hand, it will be weakened by their owners claiming protection over slaves as *property* and insisting on taxing them only as *persons*, thereby making a distinction between slaves and other property, and thus alienating from and prejudicing against it the entire non-slaveholding population, who, I ask, Mr. Speaker, will prove to be the best friends to the institutions of the South, those who advocate or those who oppose the passage of the bill under discussion? I charge no North-Carolinian with being an abolitionist or black republican, but

certainly those who insist that slaves shall be taxed as persons only, and not as property, have practically admitted the truth of the abolition and black republican doctrine, that slaves are persons and not property, and thereby "abandoned their strongest ground of defence against the assaults of the abolitionists and black republicans."

The seventh objection to altering the constitution, Mr. Speaker, is, *that the East will pay too much tax if the system of taxation ad valorem is adopted.*

Those who raise this objection, seem not to understand, or fail to appreciate, the justice and equality of the principle. In its practical application, no citizen would be called upon to pay tax on more property than he owned, and on none over which he did not claim the protection of the government. If every man paid tax only on what he was worth, on the value of his estate, certainly no one would have just cause of complaint; and no liberal or patriotic citizen would complain, whether he was an eastern or western man. If, under this system, an eastern and a western man worth \$10,000 each, pay the same amount of tax into the public treasury, for the support of the government and the payment of the public debt, how can it be made to appear that the East will pay more than its just and equitable share of the expenses of a government affording equal protection to the citizens and property of the East and the West?

But it is said the East owns more slaves than the West, and therefore, it will have to pay more tax under this system than it ought to pay. If the East owns more slaves, Mr. Speaker, it owns more property; and if it owns more property, it requires more protection; and if it requires more protection, it costs more to protect it; and if it costs more to protect it, should it not contribute to the support of the government in proportion to the protection it enjoys?

The bill under consideration does not propose or contemplate a discrimination in favor of or against any particular class of citizens or property, or any particular section of the State, in the collection of the revenue necessary to support the government, but, on the contrary, proposes to place all

the citizens and all the property, in all sections of the State, upon a perfect equality in reference to taxation, except such as the General Assembly may, as a matter of courtesy or expediency, exempt from taxation. Now, if all are placed upon a perfect equality, who can suffer by the passage of this bill?

If then, Mr. Speaker, political equality be an essential principle of democratic republican government, and the revenue laws framed under the restriction which this bill proposes to strike from the Constitution, operate unequally and unjustly, are they not at war with the fundamental principles of our government? And if the *restriction in the Constitution and the revenue law framed under that restriction are at war with the principles of the government, are not Senators reduced to the necessity of surrendering either THE ONE or THE OTHER?* And if they must yield the one or the other, which will they surrender, the *principle* or the *restriction*?

How then, Mr. Speaker, can it be called an eastern or a western measure? It is a great question of State policy, involving, not only a great cardinal principle of government, but the financial interest of every section and of the whole State.

The eighth objection to altering the Constitution is, that it will drive slaves out of the State.

Well, Mr. Speaker, where will these owners find a government under which they are as well protected at so little expense? Money is the motive power by which the machinery of government is propelled, and taxation the only means by which the supply of that motive power can be kept up, and property and persons the only subjects from which that supply can be drawn. Where then can they find a government which will protect them in the enjoyment of their property, and exempt it from taxation?

But, Mr. Speaker, if there is a Senator upon this floor, or a citizen within the limits of North-Carolina, whose soul is so contracted, whose heart is so utterly destitute of every emotion of patriotism as to be unwilling to contribute his

just proportion to the support of the government which protects his life and his property, I say let him go; he will leave the State for the good of the State. I am now ready to bid him a hearty good-bye, and when he takes up the line of march from the "Old North State" because he is unwilling either to sustain her interest or her credit with his means, or her honor with his life, I, for one, will bid him God-speed.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have but one request to make of those who leave, and that is, that when they arrive at their journey's end, and are asked why they emigrated, and they assign as the reason, that they were required to pay their fair, equal and just proportion of the taxes necessary to support the government, that they do not tell from whence they came—do not hail from North-Carolina.

The ninth objection to altering the constitution is, that constitutions are made for the protection of minorities, and, therefore, ought not to be changed. I admit that constitutions are made for the protection of minorities as well as of majorities, and that minorities ought to be protected as well as majorities; but that is no argument in favor of the restriction in the constitution which the bill under consideration proposes to remove, or against the passage of the bill; for the object of the bill is, not to put the minority in a worse condition than the majority, but to put them on an equality with the majority. If all the citizens and property of the State were now upon an equality in reference to taxation, and the bill under consideration proposed to alter the constitution so as to discriminate against the minority and in favor of the majority, then the objection would hold good; but the object of the bill being to break down a discrimination in favor of a minority, and to establish a perfect equality between them and the majority, the objection fails. And the minority certainly cannot complain at being placed on an equality with the majority; for while the rights of minorities ought to be respected and protected, they cannot reasonably expect more protection or greater privileges than majorities; it is enough if they are respected and protected as equals.

The tenth objection to the passage of the bill is, that it is dangerous to make frequent alterations in the constitution.

The constitution, Mr. Speaker, framed in 1776 by the representatives of the people, by their authority, and designed to be most conducive to their happiness and prosperity, seems to have answered the purpose for which it was framed, for fifty-nine years. It was admirably adapted to the condition and circumstances of the people for whom it was framed, and by whom it was adopted, and we cannot too much admire the wisdom and patriotism of those to whom was entrusted the duty of framing it. But the condition and circumstances of the people having undergone a change, it was thought expedient and necessary to alter the constitution in 1835. I am sorry that I have to say, that the alteration in reference to taxation was no improvement. But as the constitution was made by the people, for the purpose of promoting their happiness and prosperity, they have the unquestionable right, and ought to alter it, whenever it fails to accomplish the object for which it was framed. No statesman ever supposed that a constitution framed in 1776, or even in 1835, would be adapted to all the circumstances and meet all the wants of the State in 1860. It was doubtless expected that succeeding generations would alter it to suit themselves. But suppose they did not contemplate its alteration, have we not as much right to alter the constitution as our fathers had to frame it in 1776, or as those who altered it in 1835? If then, Mr. Speaker, we have the right to alter the constitution, and the interests of the people demand it, what danger is to be apprehended by the passage of this bill? If the interest of the people requires the alteration, is it not our duty as faithful representatives to make it? And if their representatives refuse to consult their interest and make the proposed alteration, will not the people in the exercise of their sovereign power, make the alteration themselves in their own way? They ought to do it, and they will do it.

But when I insist upon an alteration of the constitution, that is in perfect harmony with the cardinal principles of our government, the interest of the people, and necessary to the

preservation of the faith and honor of the State, I am met with the cry of the East! the East! which reminds me of the response made to Paul, when he preached the gospel of eternal truth to the Ephesians, who in like manner cried out, "great is Diana of the Ephesians! great is Diana of the Ephesians! great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

But, Mr. Speaker, I admonish those who urge this objection, to consider well the ground they occupy, before they press it too far. They seem to have lost sight of the fact that the slave-owners of the East do not constitute the East; that although there is a majority of slaves East, there is a majority of slave-holders West of the capital; and that, if all the slave-owners in the State were residents of one county, it would have a population but little larger than that of Wake. I make this statement, Mr. Speaker, not to alarm them by an exhibition of their weakness, but to induce them to pursue the line of policy so clearly indicated by interest, prudence and patriotism.

But, Sir, the last, the least urged, but the greatest real objection is, *a distrust of the people*. Notwithstanding the government of North-Carolina is the creature of the people,—that the constitution was framed by the people, and declares "that all political power is vested in and derived from the people only," and stands a towering and glorious monument of the intelligence and patriotism of our fathers and the wisdom of their posterity, there are still those who distrust their honesty and doubt their capacity for self-government. There are still those who cling to the old federal idea that the people are their own worst enemies, and ought to be governed rather than govern themselves. If they are correct, the constitution which declares "that the people of the State ought to have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police thereof," and "that no man or set of men are entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services," instead of being a monument to the intelligence and patriotism of the people, is a living slander upon the truth of history.

But, Mr. Speaker, the intelligence, honesty and patriotism of the people, and their capacity to govern themselves, are triumphantly vindicated by the moral grandeur and political power of the best and sublimest example of free government ever presented to the eye of man.

If, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the people had the right in 1776 to frame a constitution and establish a government for themselves, and did frame "a constitution most conducive to their happiness and prosperity," and that constitution afforded equal protection to all the citizens and property of the State, and imposed equal burthens upon all; and if the convention of 1835, in violation of the great principle of democratic republican equality upon which the government was established, incorporated into it a restriction upon the General Assembly in reference to taxation, discriminating against nineteen-twentieths of the people of the State; and if the financial condition of the State, as well as a just appreciation of the principles of our government requires the alteration proposed; if the injustice and inequality of our revenue laws are the result of this restriction; if the constitution was ratified without the restriction being detected by the people; if the people have been satisfied with the constitution because, until recently, the discrimination was not oppressive; if the restriction was not one of the compromises of 1835; if the public debt was incurred under the present revenue system; if the constitution should be altered and negroes taxed as other property *ad valorem*; if young negroes ought to be taxed as property because they are property; if it will not injure the institution of slavery to tax slaves *ad valorem*; if the east will not pay more than its just and fair proportion of the taxes; if it will not drive slaves out of the State; if the minority of the people being slave-owners will be as well protected as the majority; if there is no danger in altering the constitution; if the people are not distrusted; if "all political power is vested in and derived from the people only;" if the people are capable of self-government; if they "ought to have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police" of the State; if the principles of the

government, the interest of the people and the faith and honor of the State demand the passage of the bill, the alteration of the constitution, the abandonment of the present system of revenue, and the adoption of a system of taxation *ad valorem*, can, Mr. Speaker, the ingenuity of man suggest a valid objection to the passage of this bill by the constitutional majority?

But I am aware of the opposition with which this bill is to meet. I am not ignorant of the prejudices existing against it in the minds of Senators. But I challenge the investigation and discussion of the objects of the bill, either in the Senate or elsewhere. I demand to-day, upon the floor of the Senate, for my constituents, that equality at the treasurer's office which is recognized at the ballot box, and to which they are entitled under the great principles of equality, upon which the constitution was framed and the government established. I appeal to the interests, the liberality, the sense of justice, and the patriotism of Senators, in behalf not only of my own constituents but of the great mass of the people of North-Carolina, to vote for this bill and strike down a discrimination which is alike unequal, unjust and oppressive. If that demand is disregarded, and that appeal unheeded by the representatives of the people, then I appeal from the decision of the Senate to the source of all political power, the people themselves.

